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BUILDING CANADA'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURE BRAND IN THE WORLD

Canada's agriculture and food industry feeds the world safe, healthy food that is well-respected by international trading partners. Canada is the world's fourth-largest exporter in the agriculture and seafood trade, and is internationally recognized for high-quality products.

Quebec's Contribution

In Quebec, about 3.5-million hectares are occupied by farms. Although less than two per cent of the province is suitable for agriculture, agri-food exports were valued at \$4.65 billion in 2008, with about 80 per cent destined for the United States. Bounded by the St. Lawrence River and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Quebec harvests \$225-million in seafood exports from the productive waters.

Agri-Food

The top export: Frozen and fresh or chilled pork cuts represent 17.6 per cent of the total value of agri-food exports. Sixty per cent of pork produced in Quebec is exported to more than 75 countries. According to the Fédération des producteurs de porcs du Québec, pork producers raise 7.5-million hogs annually, generating revenue of \$1.5-billion dollars.

Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa represent the second-largest export category. Perhaps the confectioners are onto something. Flavonoids in chocolate are antioxidants that prevent cell damage and inflammation, and are attributed to other health benefits.

Soybeans, noted for their high-protein and high-oil content, were the third-highest export in 2008 at 4.8 per cent of agri-food exports. They are used for human consumption, animal rations, edible oils and many industrial products.

Seafood

The snow (queen) crab topped Quebec's seafood export category, at nearly 30 per cent. There was a time when queen crab was considered an annoyance. But a renaming to snow crab and an effective marketing campaign has turned this crustacean into a popular delicacy. Lobster, in the shell and as meat, comes in as the second-highest seafood export earning 16.4 per cent of export dollars.

Did you know?

Cheese has been a part of Québécois domestic fare since the earliest days. In 1885, cheddar cheese was first exported to England from Quebec. The Trappist monks of Oka introduced their famous soft cheese in 1893. Fifty years later, monks at Saint-Benoît-du-Lac began to produce cheese and have become renowned for high-quality blue cheeses. Benedictine monks in the Laurentians have pioneered goat-milk cheese. Today the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are the largest importers of Canadian specialty cheeses.

